

## Editorial Department.

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### "SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM."

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IN the number of the first of May of the *Philadelphia Medical Times*, is a characteristic editorial article on the "Sympathetic Nervous System."

Its subject naturally brings it under our notice. It is written in the vivacious style and aggressive spirit, and with the customary want of consideration of relations and consequences that distinguish so many of the utterances of the active and versatile editor of that valuable periodical.

The article in question contains several statements with which we cannot fully agree, and calculated to mislead those who may read and accept them; and hence we feel privileged, to say the least, to offer a few remarks on them, and to which we are not moved by the slightest of personal considerations.

The writer objects, in the first place, to the term "sympathetic," as hitherto applied to a certain part of the nervous system—a name which is still employed by many, though in a different sense from that it formerly conveyed. Says the writer of the article:

"For many years the so-called sympathetic nervous system has been the ever-ready slop-shop of the baffled pathologist, out of which he has drawn ever-ready explanations for all the more recondite diseases of the human system. To be sure, the garments often did not fit very well, and the winds of controversy swept through their numerous rents with chilling force, yet to many minds a sham seems better than the open nakedness of confessed ignorance. Recently those imaginative children of the present—the electro-therapeutists—have also availed themselves of this mysterious entity, and by galvanization of the sympathetic have cured all manner of human ills, almost making, according to their own reports, the blind to

any disposition to permit personal to outrank general interests in the society, may endanger the future success of the Association that has had such an auspicious beginning.

The field of medicine has become so broad that it is apparent on every hand that a division of labor, with the cultivation of special fields on the basis of a broad, sound knowledge of medicine in general, is demanded. And surely if any department is to be set in a measure by itself as a domain for special labor, there is not one that can present higher or more cogent reasons for this distinction, than that which embraces the nervous system. And we may add that there is not another, which on account of its breadth and its wide-spreading relations, has a better prospect of escaping that narrowness of view, or restricted range of sympathies, the manifestations of which, very properly constitute the vital objections to specialties, whether in medicine or out of it.

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THE *Chicago Medical Examiner* and the *Chicago Medical Journal*, after sixteen and thirty-two years respectively, of honorable and useful existence, have ceased to appear as independent publications, and have been consolidated. The new venture is to be called the *Chicago Medical Journal and Examiner*, and will be under the control of an association of gentlemen, including some of the best known and most honored names in the medical profession of the northwest. The firm of W. B. Keen, Cooke & Co., the publishers of the *Medical Journal*, will continue the publication of the new issue.

With the advantages of increased support and editorial coöperation, the new journal cannot, we think, fail to achieve success, and become one of the best medical periodicals in the country. The character of its managers is, indeed, a sufficient guarantee that this will be the case. It is to be the organ of no party or school, but will be, in all respects, independent and impartial; and it is, we understand, to aim to be a representative of truly scientific as well as practical medicine. We wish the new editors and managers the fullest success and support.